



## English Toolkit: Indicator 4.2.1

Student Handout: English: Indicator 4.2.1

### Goal 4.0 Evaluating the Content, Organization, and Language Use of Texts

Expectation 4.2 The student will assess the effectiveness of choice of details, organizational pattern, word choice, syntax, use of figurative language, and rhetorical devices.

Indicator 4.2.1 The student will assess the effectiveness of diction that reveals an author's purpose.

#### Assessment Limits:

Evaluating author's choice of words, phrases, sentences, and word order

- for a particular audience or effect
- for a given purpose
- to extend meaning in a context
- to provide emphasis

### Public Release - Selected Response Item - Released in 2009

English Indicator 4.2.1

Read the story "[Nonrepresentational Art](#)." Then answer the following item.

Read the following sentence from paragraph 11 of the story.

Mama rose from the wheelchair and swept up to the door with her walking stick in full play.

The author uses the word *swept* instead of *walked* mostly to emphasize

- A. the confidence of Mama's actions
- B. the difficulty of Mama's movements
- C. Mama's desire to meet their dinner host
- D. Mama's renewed energy after the brisk walk

Correct Answer

- A. the confidence of Mama's actions

## Item

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## Handouts

## Nonrepresentational Art, by Bailey White

My sister, Louise, thinks our mother should get out more, broaden her views, and lead a rich, full life. I myself am content to let her sit in her reclining chair all day, reading the UFO newsletter, listening to the radio, and drawing conclusions. For one thing, it's hard for her to get around, and for another, she startles people sometimes with her bloodcurdling solutions for the world's problems.

So it was my sister's idea for us all to go to supper at the house of an artist friend of hers, and afterward to an opening at an art gallery where one of his paintings was part of a juried exhibit.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Louise, who is a great believer in the benefits of physical exercise, had the idea that it would be a pleasant excursion for us to walk from her house across Tallahassee<sup>2</sup> to her friend's house. She had even gone so far as to rent a wheelchair for our mother, who can walk, but not that far and not at the pace my sister thinks provides the most aerobic<sup>3</sup> benefit. We settled Mama into the wheelchair and loaded her down with both our pocketbooks and a vase of flowers I had picked to present to our host in hopes of softening the effects of any opinions Mama might vent during the evening. Louise got a grip on the handles, and off we went.

*Tallahassee* is an Indian word meaning "City of Seven Hills." Louise set the pace at what I considered breakneck speed—a "fitness walk" she called it. Mama hung on to the armrests of the wheelchair with both hands and clamped the vase of flowers between her knees. Every block or so I would sprint around to the front of the chair to see how she was doing. Her little face peered out grimly from behind the bobbing daisies, and her knuckles were white. Every time Louise would swoop her down one of those wheelchair-accessible curbs, a dollop<sup>4</sup> of water would fly out of the vase and plop into her lap.

About halfway there Louise began giving Mama a breathless little preparatory lecture on the sort of art we were likely to see.

"What?" shouted Mama. "I can't hear you with this wind whistling around my ears."

"Nonrepresentational art!" my sister repeated.

Mama's favorite pictures are all of cows—Holstein or Jersey cows in sunny fields.

"That means no cows, Mama!" I yelled.

"Or if there are cows, you won't be able to tell it," Louise explained, puffing up the seventh hill.

<sup>11</sup>We arrived. Mama rose from the wheelchair and swept up to the door with her walking stick in full play. Louise and I hung back to catch our breath and straighten our clothing. Mama handed our host the flowers and said, "My daughters are maniacs."

<sup>12</sup>Supper was elegant, but not substantial—little dabs of pink-and-white food on lettuce leaves. Mama pulled a saltshaker out of her pocket and gave everything on her plate a heavy sprinkling. The artist-host watched, mesmerized. It was like a little snowstorm.

On the way to the gallery Mama sat in the front with our host, and Louise and I sat in back. Mama was telling him all about Holstein cows. We were proud to see that his picture had won first place. It was a small watercolor, with streaks of light green and tan. It might have been a tiger in sunlight, but this being Florida, I thought more of a palmetto frond. Louise and I looked carefully at all the pictures. Then we wandered out onto the porch, where we found Mama and the artist sitting in chairs and talking.

<sup>14</sup> I could tell from the fully present look of the top of his glowing bald head that Mama was describing her invention of a cure for male-pattern baldness. She calls it "the axillary transplant." After a while we all headed back to Louise's house. The artist seemed a little distracted as he helped us unload Mama's wheelchair and then shook her hand. We told him good-night, and congratulations.

Driving Mama home from my sister's house, I wondered what that nonrepresentational artist would dream about that night as he lay in bed with the top of his head tingling. Probably he would dream about his prize-winning painting at the art gallery. But just maybe in his dreams, those dim green-and-tan vegetable tigers will melt away, and in their place will stand a herd of Holsteins in a sunny field, with all the light and all the shadows in the world seeping out of the black and white of those cows.

I can't wait for his next exhibit.

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<sup>1</sup> juried exhibit: an exhibit in which only works of art approved by a jury or panel of artists are displayed

<sup>2</sup> Tallahassee: capital of Florida

<sup>3</sup> aerobic: that which strengthens the cardiovascular system

<sup>4</sup> dollop: splash